

The National Conference Program

On page 13 of this issue will be found the program for the National Conference of the Brethren church to be held at Winona from August 31, to September 5. With the exception of the Friday afternoon and evening sessions the items on the program are not arranged according to time, that is the program does not give the time when the different topics are to be discussed. This is to be arranged by a program committee or by the executive committee as the conference may designate. There will also be a few changes in the assignment of several topics as they now appear. The subject, "Needs of Ashland College," is assigned to Brother Darling instead of Brother Furry. "Short Talks by District Evangelists" will be added to the program, and a few other minor changes made. It will be published again next week, and the few changes made, and several hundred copies run off for use at the Conference.

It will be noted that the Conference begins on Friday and closes on Wednesday of the following week. This will give our people an opportunity to spend the Sabbath at Winona which is always a pleasant and a profitable day there. It is to be hoped that those on the program will begin the work of preparation at once, and that others will make arrangements now to be present at this meeting. Churches everywhere should give their pastors a Sabbath off and encourage them in more than one way to attend the Conference. Each succeeding Conference should be the best we have ever had, otherwise we are not making commendable progress, in fact no progress at all. We hope to be able, not editorially only, but in other departments of the paper, to keep the work of the Conference constantly before our people until time of meeting.

Seeking Christ's Approval

In all our life work we should have but one aim, and that to please God. It is not ourselves we should seek to please, nor our neighbor, but Christ. If we have his approval let the world disapprove if it wills to do so. The story is told by Dr. J. R. Miller, of a young composer who had written a piece of fine music, and was listening to its first performance in the great hall. The applause was very great as the music was performed. But the young composer did not seem to care for this. All the while his eyes were on one man, who sat at the center of the hall. This was his old master, wise and skilled; and he cared far more for his approval than for all the thunderous applause of the people. One is our Master, even Christ, and we should care far more for his approval than for the applause of the world. Men may and do misunderstand us; they may misinterpret our motives; they may falsely accuse

us, and wrongly judge of our actions, but for all these we need not care if we are sure of the Master's approval. Not what the world thinks, but what Christ thinks, should govern us in all we do. Christ's judgment is perfect, it never fails. His judgment is not after the sight of his eyes, neither after the hearing of his ears. It is not according to appearances. He knows what is in man and has no need that any one should tell him. It is pleasing to have the approval of the blessed Master in our life and work. Let the world scorn if it will, the Christian cares only for the smile of Jesus. How often the Christian is misunderstood, misrepresented, and his actions misconstrued, but with his eyes fixed on the eternal and the unseen, with the consciousness of Christ's approval, he goes forward in the path of duty oblivious of the world's opinion and judgment.

Are You Inspired?

Perhaps you think it is a foolish question, but it is not. It is a very wise and a very important question. Let us distinguish between the two meanings of the word. We say for example that the Bible was inspired, by which we mean that "holy men of God" were divinely directed to set down the words as we read them. This measure of inspiration is no longer manifest among men, for the reason that authoritative relation is now complete, and there is no further need of the kind and quality of inspiration which was its instrument. Doubtless when this dispensation is wound up and another is introduced, there will be other inspired revelation, bringing the knowledge of God's will down to human comprehension. "Was the Bible inspired?" is and has always been a weighty question between believers and unbelievers, a question upon which hung the greatest of consequences to every man. But scarcely of less weight and importance is that other question,—Are you inspired? for upon the answer to that question depends your history and destiny. We may be inspired by a great idea, a great thought, a great purpose, a great work, a great love, and this inspiration makes all the difference between a clod and a man. How it fills him with a divine enthusiasm, contagious and refreshing to all who come in contact with it. How greatly worth while it is to come under the influence and to witness the miracles of a man thus inspired. How marvelously will this enthusiasm transform even the most common-place talent, and make a Boanerges out of a lump of earth. And how sadly the absence of it will dull the edge of the keenest intellect, and bury the noblest talent out of sight and hearing. The most pitiable sight in the world, and especially in the church, is a man of splendid gifts and no inspiration. It is like an engine side-tracked, and all its fires gone out.

Perhaps they are in every church, for they are certainly in ours, and a thousand readers of these lines would perhaps whisper the same names, two or three, in whose souls the fires of inspiration have burned low, so that they no longer shine as stars in the firmament of our Zion, and there are many among us who sorrow thereat. The engine which once grandly forged a head on the main line has been side-tracked in some jungle of personal or worldly interest, and the fires of the divine inspiration have burned low, and gone out. May the Lord breathe into them again the breath of life, so that each one may once more be a living soul.

Groveling in the Dust

What a pitiable sight to see a man groveling in the dust, a man who was created in God's own image, a life made for God and Godlikeness. It is a sight to move angels to tears to see men and women who were made for nobleness, to live for God's glory and honor, crawling on the earth and living only for the things of this earth. If we would be true to our God and to the purpose of our creation, we must look away from earthly things, set our affections on things above, things that are heavenly. No life is worth living that does not carry with it the things that can accompany it into the eternal years. Let us cease groveling in the dust and rise to the plane of life consistent with the high purpose of God in Christ Jesus.

Illusions of Materialism

Many and far reaching and profound are the illusions of materialism. The things which are seen are really a veil over the vision of the soul. We walk in the midst of tangible unrealities, for nothing is real which will not remain. We feel the solid ground beneath our feet, we gaze upon the "everlasting hills," we fill our lives with the busy absorptions of husbandry and traffic, we eat and drink as if on no tomorrow we die, we built houses and temples out of the supposed solid realities at our hand, expecting them to defy time, and forgetting that after they have surely crumbled to dust it will not seem as if they ever existed at all. Only he lives wisely who lives for the more abundant life. Only he journeys wisely who seeks the city which hath foundations. Only he builds wisely who out of the things which are not seen builds a home in the world which is not seen. "For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Those who have been led astray or are inclined to be led astray by that delusion which calls itself Christian Science will find thought for reflection in the following from the editor of the Herald and Presbyter:

That system of delusion which loves to be known as Christian Science claims to have